

NEF CONE OF FLAG BUNDLES OVER A CURVE

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ABSTRACT. Let X be a smooth projective curve defined over an algebraically closed field k , and let E be a vector bundle on X . Let $\mathcal{O}_{\mathrm{Gr}_r(E)}(1)$ be the tautological line bundle over the Grassmann bundle $\mathrm{Gr}_r(E)$ parametrizing all the r dimensional quotients of the fibers of E . We give necessary and sufficient conditions for $\mathcal{O}_{\mathrm{Gr}_r(E)}(1)$ to be ample and nef respectively. As an application, we compute the nef cone of $\mathrm{Gr}_r(E)$. This yields a description of the nef cone of any flag bundle over X associated to E .

1. INTRODUCTION

Let E be a semistable vector bundle over a smooth projective curve defined over an algebraically closed field of characteristic zero. Miyaoka computed the nef cone of $\mathbb{P}(E)$ [Mi, p. 456, Theorem 3.1]. Our aim here is to compute the nef cone of the flag bundles associated to vector bundles over curves.

Let X be an irreducible smooth projective curve defined over an algebraically closed field k (the characteristic is not necessarily zero). If the characteristic of k is positive, the absolute Frobenius morphism of X will be denoted by F_X . A vector bundle E on X is called strongly semistable if all the pullbacks of E by the iterations of F_X are semistable.

Let E be a vector bundle on X . Let

$$(1.1) \quad E_1 \subset E_2 \subset \cdots \subset E_{m-1} \subset E_m = E$$

be the Harder–Narasimhan filtration of E . If the characteristic of k is zero, and

$$f : Y \longrightarrow X$$

is a nonconstant morphism, where Y is an irreducible smooth projective curve, then the pulled back filtration

$$f^*E_1 \subset f^*E_2 \subset \cdots \subset f^*E_{m-1} \subset f^*E_m = f^*E$$

coincides with the Harder–Narasimhan filtration of f^*E . If the characteristic of k is positive, then this is not true in general. However, there is an integer n_E , that depends on E , such that the Harder–Narasimhan filtration of $(F_X^n)^*E$ has this property if $n \geq n_E$, meaning the Harder–Narasimhan filtration of $f^*(F_X^n)^*E$ is the pullback, by f , of the Harder–Narasimhan filtration of $(F_X^n)^*E$, where f is any nonconstant morphism to X from an irreducible smooth projective curve.

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Fix an integer $r \in [1, \text{rank}(E) - 1]$. Let $\text{Gr}_r(E)$ be the Grassmann bundle on X parametrizing all the r dimensional quotients of the fibers of E . The tautological line bundle on $\text{Gr}_r(E)$ will be denoted by $\mathcal{O}_{\text{Gr}_r(E)}(1)$.

If the characteristic of k is positive, consider the Harder–Narasimhan filtration of $(F_X^{n_E})^*E$

$$0 = V_0 \subset V_1 \subset V_2 \subset \cdots \subset V_{d-1} \subset V_d = (F_X^{n_E})^*E,$$

where n_E is as above; if the characteristic of k is zero, then simply take the Harder–Narasimhan filtration of E . So V_i is E_i in (1.1) if the characteristic of k is zero. Using only the numerical data associated to this filtration, we can compute a rational number $\theta_{E,r}$ (see (3.5)). The following theorem shows that $\theta_{E,r}$ controls the positivity of the tautological line bundle $\mathcal{O}_{\text{Gr}_r(E)}(1)$ on $\text{Gr}_r(E)$.

Theorem 1.1. *If $\theta_{E,r} > 0$, then the tautological line bundle $\mathcal{O}_{\text{Gr}_r(E)}(1)$ is ample.*

If $\theta_{E,r} = 0$, then $\mathcal{O}_{\text{Gr}_r(E)}(1)$ is nef but not ample.

If $\theta_{E,r} < 0$, then $\mathcal{O}_{\text{Gr}_r(E)}(1)$ is not nef.

(See Theorem 3.4 for a proof of the above theorem.)

As an application of Theorem 1.1, we compute the nef cone of $\text{Gr}_r(E)$ (this is done in Section 4).

In order to know the nef cone of a flag bundle over X associated to E , it is enough to know the nef cones of the corresponding Grassmann bundles associated to E . Therefore, using our description of the nef cone of the Grassmann bundles we obtain a description of the nef cone of any flag bundle over X associated to E ; see Theorem 5.1.

Let $K_\varphi^{-1} := K_{\text{Gr}_r(E)}^{-1} \otimes \varphi^*K_X$ be the relative anti-canonical line bundle for the natural projection $\varphi : \text{Gr}_r(E) \rightarrow X$. It is known that K_φ^{-1} is never ample. If the characteristic of k is zero, then K_φ^{-1} is nef if and only if E is semistable [BB]; if the characteristic of k is positive, then K_φ^{-1} is nef if and only if E is strongly semistable [BH]. These criteria for semistability and strong semistability follow from the description of the nef cone of $\text{Gr}_r(E)$ given in Proposition 4.1 and Proposition 4.4.

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2. PRELIMINARIES

Let k be an algebraically closed field. Let X be an irreducible smooth projective curve defined over k . If the characteristic of k is positive, then we have the absolute Frobenius morphism

$$F_X : X \rightarrow X.$$

For convenience, if the characteristic of k is zero, by F_X we will denote the identity morphism of X . For any integer $m \geq 1$, let

$$F_X^m := \overbrace{F_X \circ \cdots \circ F_X}^{m\text{-times}} : X \longrightarrow X$$

be the m -fold iteration of F_X . For notational convenience, by F_X^0 we will denote the identity morphism of X .

For a vector bundle E over X of positive rank, define the number

$$\mu(E) := \frac{\text{degree}(E)}{\text{rank}(E)} \in \mathbb{Q}.$$

A vector bundle E over X is called *semistable* if for every nonzero subbundle $V \subset E$, the inequality

$$\mu(V) \leq \mu(E)$$

holds. The vector bundle E is called *strongly semistable* if the pullback $(F_X^m)^*E$ is semistable for all $m \geq 0$.

For every vector bundle E on X , there is a unique filtration of subbundles

$$0 = E_0 \subset E_1 \subset \cdots \subset E_{d_E-1} \subset E_{d_E} = E$$

such that E_i/E_{i-1} is semistable for each $i \in [1, d_E]$, and $\mu(E_i/E_{i-1}) > \mu(E_{i+1}/E_i)$ for all $i \in [1, d_E-1]$. It is known as the *Harder–Narasimhan filtration* of E . If E is semistable, then $d_E = 1$.

Given any E , there is a nonnegative integer δ satisfying the condition that for all $i \geq 1$,

$$(2.1) \quad 0 = (F_X^i)^*V_0 \subset (F_X^i)^*V_1 \subset \cdots \subset (F_X^i)^*V_{d-1} \subset (F_X^i)^*V_d = (F_X^{i+\delta})^*E$$

is the Harder–Narasimhan filtration of $(F_X^{i+\delta})^*E$, where

$$(2.2) \quad 0 = V_0 \subset V_1 \subset \cdots \subset V_{d-1} \subset V_d = (F_X^\delta)^*E$$

is the Harder–Narasimhan filtration of $(F_X^\delta)^*E$ [Lan, p. 259, Theorem 2.7] (this is vacuously true if the characteristic of k is zero). It should be emphasized that δ in (2.1) depends on E .

Note that the quotient V_i/V_{i-1} in the filtration in (2.2) is strongly semistable for all $i \in [1, d]$. If δ satisfies the above condition, then clearly $\delta + j$ also satisfies the above condition for all $j \geq 0$.

For a vector bundle E on X , let $\mathbb{P}(E)$ denote the projective bundle over X parametrizing all the hyperplanes in the fibers of E . The vector bundle E is called *ample* if the tautological line bundle $\mathcal{O}_{\mathbb{P}(E)}(1)$ on $\mathbb{P}(E)$ is ample (see [Ha] for properties of ample bundles).

A line bundle L over an irreducible projective variety Z defined over k is called *numerically effective* (“nef” for short) if for all pairs of the form (C, f) , where C is a smooth projective curve, and f is a morphism from C to Z , the inequality

$$\text{degree}(f^*L) \geq 0$$

holds. A vector bundle E is called *nef* if the tautological line bundle $\mathcal{O}_{\mathbb{P}(E)}(1)$ over $\mathbb{P}(E)$ is nef.

The following lemma is well-known.

Lemma 2.1. *Let $0 \rightarrow W \rightarrow E \rightarrow Q \rightarrow 0$ be a short exact sequence of vector bundles. If both W and Q are ample (respectively, nef), then E is ample (respectively, nef).*

See [Ha, p. 71, Corollary 3.4] for the case of ample bundles, and [DPS, p. 308, Proposition 1.15(ii)] for the case of nef vector bundles.

3. (SEMI)POSITIVITY CRITERION

Let E be a vector bundle over X of rank at least two. Fix an integer $r \in [1, \text{rank}(E)-1]$. Let

$$(3.1) \quad \varphi : \text{Gr}_r(E) \rightarrow X$$

be the Grassmann bundle over X parametrizing all the quotients, of dimension r , of the fibers of E . Let

$$(3.2) \quad \mathcal{O}_{\text{Gr}_r(E)}(1) \rightarrow \text{Gr}_r(E)$$

be the tautological line bundle; the fiber of $\mathcal{O}_{\text{Gr}_r(E)}(1)$ over any quotient Q of E_x is $\bigwedge^r Q$. So the line bundle $\mathcal{O}_{\text{Gr}_r(E)}(1)$ is relatively ample.

Take any δ satisfying the condition in (2.1). Let

$$(3.3) \quad 0 = V_0 \subset V_1 \subset \cdots \subset V_{d-1} \subset V_d = (F_X^\delta)^* E$$

be the Harder–Narasimhan filtration of $(F_X^\delta)^* E$. We recall that V_i/V_{i-1} is strongly semistable for all $i \in [1, d]$. Let

$$t \in [1, d]$$

be the unique largest integer such that

$$(3.4) \quad \sum_{i=t}^d \text{rank}(V_i/V_{i-1}) \geq r;$$

so either $t = d$, or t is the smallest integer with

$$\sum_{i=t+1}^d \text{rank}(V_i/V_{i-1}) = \text{rank}(((F_X^\delta)^* E)/V_t) < r.$$

Define

$$(3.5) \quad \theta_{E,r} := (r - \text{rank}(((F_X^\delta)^* E)/V_t)) \cdot \mu(V_t/V_{t-1}) + \text{degree}(((F_X^\delta)^* E)/V_t),$$

where t is defined above using (3.4). If E is strongly semistable, then we may take $\delta = 1$; in that case, $\theta_{E,r} = r \cdot \mu(E)$. Note that the condition that $\theta_{E,r}$ is nonzero, or the condition that $\theta_{E,r}$ is positive, does not depend on the choice of the integer δ in (3.3).

Lemma 3.1. *Assume that $\theta_{E,r} > 0$. Then the line bundle $\mathcal{O}_{\text{Gr}_r(E)}(1) \rightarrow \text{Gr}_r(E)$ in (3.2) is ample.*

Proof. Consider the Plücker embedding

$$(3.6) \quad \rho : \mathrm{Gr}_r(E) \longrightarrow \mathbb{P}(\bigwedge^r E).$$

We have

$$(3.7) \quad \rho^* \mathcal{O}_{\mathbb{P}(\bigwedge^r E)}(1) = \mathcal{O}_{\mathrm{Gr}_r(E)}(1).$$

Therefore, to prove that $\mathcal{O}_{\mathrm{Gr}_r(E)}(1)$ is ample, it suffices to show that the vector bundle $\bigwedge^r E$ is ample. Since F_X^δ is a finite flat surjective morphism, it follows that $\bigwedge^r E$ is ample if and only if $(F_X^\delta)^* \bigwedge^r E$ is ample [Ha, p. 73, Proposition 4.3].

Using the filtration in (3.3) it follows that the vector bundle $(F_X^\delta)^* \bigwedge^r E$ admits a filtration of subbundles such that each successive quotient is of the form

$$(3.8) \quad V_{\underline{a}} := \bigotimes_{i=1}^d \bigwedge^{a_i} (V_i/V_{i-1})$$

with $\sum_{i=1}^d a_i = r$; we use the standard convention that $\bigwedge^0 F$ is the trivial line bundle for every vector bundle F . Since each V_i/V_{i-1} is strongly semistable, the above vector bundle $V_{\underline{a}}$ is also strongly semistable (see [RR, p. 285, Theorem 3.18] for $\mathrm{Char}(k) = 0$, and [RR, p. 288, Theorem 3.23] for $\mathrm{Char}(k) > 0$). From the assumption that $\theta_{E,r} > 0$ it follows immediately that

$$(3.9) \quad \mathrm{degree}(V_{\underline{a}}) > 0.$$

Since $V_{\underline{a}}$ is strongly semistable of positive degree, it can be shown that $V_{\underline{a}}$ is ample [BP]. We include the details for completeness.

To prove that $V_{\underline{a}}$ is ample, we need to show that for any coherent sheaf \mathcal{E} on X , there is a positive integer $b_{\mathcal{E}}$ such that

$$(3.10) \quad H^1(X, \mathrm{Sym}^j(V_{\underline{a}}) \otimes \mathcal{E}) = 0$$

for all $j \geq b_{\mathcal{E}}$ [Ha, p. 70, Proposition 3.3]. Since $H^1(X, \mathrm{Sym}^j(V_{\underline{a}}) \otimes \mathcal{E}) = 0$ if \mathcal{E} is a torsion sheaf, and any vector bundle on X admits a filtration of subbundles such that each successive quotient is a line bundle, it is enough to prove (3.10) for all line bundles \mathcal{E} . Take a line bundle \mathcal{E} . Since $V_{\underline{a}}$ is strongly semistable, it follows that $\mathrm{Sym}^j(V_{\underline{a}})$ is semistable for all $j \geq 1$ (see [RR, p. 285, Theorem 3.18] for $\mathrm{Char}(k) = 0$, and [RR, p. 288, Theorem 3.23] for $\mathrm{Char}(k) > 0$). Therefore, the vector bundle $\mathrm{Sym}^j(V_{\underline{a}})^* \otimes \mathcal{E}^* \otimes K_X$ is semistable. Now, from (3.9) we conclude that

$$\mu(\mathrm{Sym}^j(V_{\underline{a}})^* \otimes \mathcal{E}^* \otimes K_X) = -j \cdot \mu(V_{\underline{a}}) - \mathrm{degree}(\mathcal{E}) + 2(\mathrm{genus}(X) - 1) < 0$$

for all j sufficiently large positive. Consequently,

$$H^0(X, \mathrm{Sym}^j(V_{\underline{a}})^* \otimes \mathcal{E}^* \otimes K_X) = 0$$

for all j sufficiently large positive. Therefore, from Serre duality,

$$H^1(X, \mathrm{Sym}^j(V_{\underline{a}}) \otimes \mathcal{E}) = 0$$

for all j sufficiently large positive. Hence $V_{\underline{a}}$ is ample.

We note that if the characteristic of k is zero, then the nef cone of the projective bundle $\mathbb{P}(V_{\underline{a}})$ is explicitly described in [Mi, p. 456, Theorem 3.1(4)]. It is straightforward to check

that the tautological line bundle $\mathcal{O}_{\mathbb{P}(V_{\underline{a}})}(1)$ lies in the interior of the nef cone of $\mathbb{P}(V_{\underline{a}})$. This also proves that $V_{\underline{a}}$ is ample under the assumption that the characteristic of k is zero.

Since $V_{\underline{a}}$ is ample, and $(F_X^\delta)^* \bigwedge^r E$ admits a filtration of subbundles such that each successive quotient is of the form $V_{\underline{a}}$, using Lemma 2.1 we conclude that the vector bundle $(F_X^\delta)^* \bigwedge^r E$ is ample. We noted earlier that $\mathcal{O}_{\text{Gr}_r(E)}(1)$ is ample if $(F_X^\delta)^* \bigwedge^r E$ is ample. \square

Lemma 3.2. *Assume that $\theta_{E,r}$ defined in (3.5) satisfies the inequality $\theta_{E,r} < 0$. Then $\mathcal{O}_{\text{Gr}_r(E)}(1)$ is not nef.*

Proof. Consider the strongly semistable vector bundle V_t/V_{t-1} (see (3.5)). Given any real number $\epsilon > 0$, and any $s \in [1, \text{rank}(V_t/V_{t-1})]$, there exists an irreducible smooth projective curve Y , a nonconstant morphism

$$f : Y \longrightarrow X,$$

and a subbundle

$$(3.11) \quad W \subset f^*(V_t/V_{t-1})$$

of rank s , such that

$$(3.12) \quad \mu(V_t/V_{t-1}) - \frac{\mu(W)}{\text{degree}(f)} = \frac{\mu(f^*(V_t/V_{t-1})) - \mu(W)}{\text{degree}(f)} < \epsilon$$

(see [PS, p. 525, Theorem 4.1]). Set

$$s = r - \text{rank}(((F_X^\delta)^* E)/V_t) \quad \text{and} \quad \epsilon = -\frac{\theta_{E,r}}{2s}.$$

Let Q be the quotient of $f^*(F_X^\delta)^* E$ defined by the composition

$$f^*(F_X^\delta)^* E \longrightarrow f^*(((F_X^\delta)^* E)/V_{t-1}) \longrightarrow f^*(((F_X^\delta)^* E)/V_{t-1})/W,$$

where f and W are as in (3.11) for the above choices of s and ϵ . Note that

$$\text{degree}(Q) = \text{degree}(f) \cdot \text{degree}(((F_X^\delta)^* E)/V_t) + (\text{degree}(f) \cdot \text{degree}(V_t/V_{t-1}) - \text{degree}(W)).$$

Hence from (3.5),

$$\text{degree}(Q) = \text{degree}(f)(\theta_{E,r} + (\mu(V_t/V_{t-1}) - \frac{\mu(W)}{\text{degree}(f)}) \cdot s).$$

But from (3.12), we have $\mu(V_t/V_{t-1}) - \mu(W)/\text{degree}(f) < \epsilon$. Consequently,

$$(3.13) \quad \text{degree}(Q) < 0.$$

The quotient bundle $f^*(F_X^\delta)^* E \longrightarrow Q$ of rank r defines a morphism

$$\phi : Y \longrightarrow \text{Gr}_r((F_X^\delta)^* E) = (F_X^\delta)^* \text{Gr}_r(E),$$

where $\text{Gr}_r((F_X^\delta)^* E)$ is the Grassmann bundle parametrizing all r dimensional quotients of the fibers of $(F_X^\delta)^* E$, and $(F_X^\delta)^* \text{Gr}_r(E)$ is the pullback of the fiber bundle $\text{Gr}_r(E) \longrightarrow X$

using the morphism F_X^δ . Consider the commutative diagram

$$(3.14) \quad \begin{array}{ccc} (F_X^\delta)^* \mathrm{Gr}_r(E) & \xrightarrow{\beta} & \mathrm{Gr}_r(E) \\ \downarrow & & \downarrow \\ X & \xrightarrow{F_X^\delta} & X \end{array}$$

of morphisms. We have $\beta^* \mathcal{O}_{\mathrm{Gr}_r(E)}(1) = \mathcal{O}_{\mathrm{Gr}_r((F_X^\delta)^* E)}(1)$, where $\mathcal{O}_{\mathrm{Gr}_r((F_X^\delta)^* E)}(1)$ is the tautological line bundle, and β is the morphism in (3.14). Hence from the definition of ϕ it follows immediately that

$$(\beta \circ \phi)^* \mathcal{O}_{\mathrm{Gr}_r(E)}(1) = \bigwedge^r Q.$$

Now from (3.13) we conclude that $\mathcal{O}_{\mathrm{Gr}_r(E)}(1)$ is not nef. \square

Lemma 3.3. *Assume that $\theta_{E,r} = 0$ (defined in (3.5)). Then $\mathcal{O}_{\mathrm{Gr}_r(E)}(1)$ is nef but not ample.*

Proof. The proof that $\mathcal{O}_{\mathrm{Gr}_r(E)}(1)$ is nef is very similar to the proof of Lemma 3.1.

We know that $\bigwedge^r E$ is nef if and only if $(F_X^\delta)^* \bigwedge^r E$ is nef [Fu, p. 360, Proposition 2.3] and [Fu, p. 360, Proposition 2.2]. Consider the vector bundles $V_{\underline{a}}$ in (3.8). We noted earlier that $V_{\underline{a}}$ is strongly semistable. The condition that $\theta_{E,r} = 0$ implies that

$$\mathrm{degree}(V_{\underline{a}}) \geq 0.$$

A strongly semistable vector bundle W over X of nonnegative degree is nef. To prove this, take any morphism

$$\psi : Y \longrightarrow \mathbb{P}(W),$$

where Y is an irreducible smooth projective curve. Let $h : \mathbb{P}(W) \longrightarrow X$ be the natural projection. The pullback $\psi^* h^* W$ is semistable because W is strongly semistable. Since $\psi^* \mathcal{O}_{\mathbb{P}(W)}(1)$ is a quotient of $\psi^* h^* W$, and $\mathrm{degree}(\psi^* h^* W) \geq 0$, we conclude that $\mathrm{degree}(\psi^* \mathcal{O}_{\mathbb{P}(W)}(1)) \geq 0$. Hence $\mathcal{O}_{\mathbb{P}(W)}(1)$ is nef, meaning W is nef.

The above observation implies that the vector bundle $V_{\underline{a}}$ is nef.

Since each successive quotient of the filtration of $(F_X^\delta)^* \bigwedge^r E$ is nef (as they are of the form $V_{\underline{a}}$), from Lemma 2.1 we know that $(F_X^\delta)^* \bigwedge^r E$ is nef. We noted earlier that $\bigwedge^r E$ is nef if $(F_X^\delta)^* \bigwedge^r E$ is so. Now using (3.6) and (3.7) we conclude that $\mathcal{O}_{\mathrm{Gr}_r(E)}(1)$ is nef.

To complete the proof of the lemma we need to show that $\mathcal{O}_{\mathrm{Gr}_r(E)}(1)$ is not ample.

Consider V_t/V_{t-1} in (3.5). Let

$$(3.15) \quad f : \mathrm{Gr}_s(V_t/V_{t-1}) \longrightarrow X$$

be the Grassmann bundle parametrizing quotients of the fibers of V_t/V_{t-1} of dimension

$$(3.16) \quad s := r - \mathrm{rank}(((F_X^\delta)^* E)/V_t).$$

Let

$$(3.17) \quad \gamma : \mathrm{Gr}_s(V_t/V_{t-1}) \longrightarrow \mathrm{Gr}_r((F_X^\delta)^* E)$$

be the morphism of fiber bundles over X that sends any quotient $q : (V_t/V_{t-1})_x \rightarrow Q$ to the quotient defined by the composition

$$((F_X^\delta)^* E)_x \rightarrow (((F_X^\delta)^* E)/V_{t-1})_x \rightarrow (((F_X^\delta)^* E)/V_{t-1})_x / \ker(q).$$

To define γ using the universal property of a Grassmannian, let

$$f^*(V_t/V_{t-1}) \xrightarrow{\tilde{q}} \mathcal{Q} \rightarrow 0$$

be the universal quotient bundle of rank s over $\mathrm{Gr}_s(V_t/V_{t-1})$. Now consider the diagram of homomorphisms

$$\begin{array}{ccc} & \ker(\tilde{q}) & \hookrightarrow V_t/V_{t-1} \xrightarrow{\tilde{q}} \mathcal{Q} \\ & \cap & \cap \\ f^*(F_X^\delta)^* E & \xrightarrow{\hat{q}} ((F_X^\delta)^* E)/V_{t-1} & = ((F_X^\delta)^* E)/V_{t-1} \\ & \downarrow h & \\ & (((F_X^\delta)^* E)/V_{t-1})/\ker(\tilde{q}) & \end{array}$$

Note that $\mathrm{rank}(((F_X^\delta)^* E)/V_{t-1})/\ker(\tilde{q}) = r$ by (3.16). Let

$$\tilde{\gamma} : \mathrm{Gr}_s(V_t/V_{t-1}) \rightarrow \mathrm{Gr}_r(f^*(F_X^\delta)^* E) = \mathrm{Gr}_s(V_t/V_{t-1}) \times_X \mathrm{Gr}_r((F_X^\delta)^* E)$$

be the morphism representing the surjective homomorphism $h \circ \hat{q}$ in the above diagram. The morphism γ in (3.17) is the composition of $\tilde{\gamma}$ with the natural projection $\mathrm{Gr}_s(V_t/V_{t-1}) \times_X \mathrm{Gr}_r((F_X^\delta)^* E) \rightarrow \mathrm{Gr}_r((F_X^\delta)^* E)$.

The morphism γ in (3.17) is clearly an embedding. Define the line bundle

$$\mathcal{L} := \det(((F_X^\delta)^* E)/V_t) = \bigotimes_{i=t+1}^d \bigwedge^{\mathrm{rank}(V_i/V_{i-1})} (V_i/V_{i-1})$$

on X . We note that

$$(3.18) \quad \gamma^* \mathcal{O}_{\mathrm{Gr}_r((F_X^\delta)^* E)}(1) = \mathcal{O}_{\mathrm{Gr}_s(V_t/V_{t-1})}(1) \otimes f^* \mathcal{L},$$

where $\mathcal{O}_{\mathrm{Gr}_s(V_t/V_{t-1})}(1) \rightarrow \mathrm{Gr}_s(V_t/V_{t-1})$ is the tautological line bundle.

For any integer n , the line bundles $\mathcal{O}_{\mathrm{Gr}_r((F_X^\delta)^* E)}(1)^{\otimes n}$ and $\mathcal{O}_{\mathrm{Gr}_s(V_t/V_{t-1})}(1)^{\otimes n}$ will be denoted by $\mathcal{O}_{\mathrm{Gr}_r((F_X^\delta)^* E)}(n)$ and $\mathcal{O}_{\mathrm{Gr}_s(V_t/V_{t-1})}(n)$ respectively.

Assume that $\mathcal{O}_{\mathrm{Gr}_r(E)}(1)$ is ample. Since F_X^δ is a finite morphism, this implies that $\mathcal{O}_{\mathrm{Gr}_r((F_X^\delta)^* E)}(1)$ is ample. Therefore, the pullback $\gamma^* \mathcal{O}_{\mathrm{Gr}_r((F_X^\delta)^* E)}(1)$ is ample because γ is an embedding. Hence for sufficiently large positive n , we have

$$(3.19) \quad \dim H^0(\mathrm{Gr}_s(V_t/V_{t-1}), \gamma^* \mathcal{O}_{\mathrm{Gr}_r((F_X^\delta)^* E)}(n)) = cn^{d_0} + \sum_{j=0}^{d_0-1} a_j n^j$$

with $c > 0$, where $d_0 = \dim \mathrm{Gr}_s(V_t/V_{t-1})$.

For convenience, the integer $\mathrm{rank}(V_t/V_{t-1})$ will be denoted by r_t .

Let $K_f^{-1} := K_{\mathrm{Gr}_s(V_t/V_{t-1})}^{-1} \otimes f^* K_X$ be the relative anti-canonical line bundle for the projection f in (3.15). We have,

$$(3.20) \quad K_f^{-1} = \mathcal{O}_{\mathrm{Gr}_s(V_t/V_{t-1})}(r_t) \otimes ((\bigwedge^{r_t} (V_t/V_{t-1}))^{\otimes s})^*,$$

where s is defined in (3.16). The given condition that $\theta_{E,r} = 0$ implies that

$$-s \cdot \text{degree}(V_t/V_{t-1}) = r_t \cdot \text{degree}(((F_X^\delta)^* E)/V_t).$$

Hence the two line bundles $((\bigwedge^{r_t}(V_t/V_{t-1}))^{\otimes s})^*$ and $\mathcal{L}^{\otimes r_t}$ differ by tensoring with a line bundle of degree zero. Therefore, from (3.20) we conclude that

$$(\mathcal{O}_{\text{Gr}_s(V_t/V_{t-1})}(1) \otimes \mathcal{L})^{\otimes r_t} = K_f^{-1} \otimes f^* \mathcal{L}_0,$$

where \mathcal{L}_0 is a line bundle on X of degree zero. Now, from (3.18),

$$(3.21) \quad \gamma^* \mathcal{O}_{\text{Gr}_r((F_X^\delta)^* E)}(r_t) = K_f^{-1} \otimes f^* \mathcal{L}_0.$$

From the projection formula, and (3.21),

$$(3.22) \quad H^0(\text{Gr}_s(V_t/V_{t-1}), \gamma^* \mathcal{O}_{\text{Gr}_r((F_X^\delta)^* E)}(n \cdot r_t)) = H^0(X, (f_*(K_f^{-1})^{\otimes n}) \otimes \mathcal{L}_0^{\otimes n}).$$

We will show that the line bundle $\det(f_*(K_f^{-1})^{\otimes n}) \rightarrow X$ is trivial. For that, let $F_{\text{GL}_{r_t}}$ be the principal $\text{GL}_{r_t}(k)$ -bundle on X defined by the vector bundle V_t/V_{t-1} ; the fiber of $F_{\text{GL}_{r_t}}$ over any point $x \in X$ is the space of all linear isomorphisms from $k^{\oplus r_t}$ to the fiber $(V_t/V_{t-1})_x$. Let $F_{\text{PGL}_{r_t}} := F_{\text{GL}_{r_t}}/\mathbb{G}_m$ be the corresponding principal $\text{PGL}_{r_t}(k)$ -bundle. The vector bundle $f_*(K_f^{-1})^{\otimes n}$ is the one associated to the principal $\text{PGL}_{r_t}(k)$ -bundle $F_{\text{PGL}_{r_t}}$ for the $\text{PGL}_{r_t}(k)$ -module $H^0(\text{Gr}_s(k^{\oplus r_t}), (K_{\text{Gr}_s(k^{\oplus r_t})}^{-1})^{\otimes n})$ (the action of $\text{PGL}_{r_t}(k)$ on the space of sections is given by the standard action of $\text{PGL}_{r_t}(k)$ on $\text{Gr}_s(k^{\oplus r_t})$). Since $\text{PGL}_{r_t}(k)$ does not have any nontrivial character, the line bundle $\det(f_*(K_f^{-1})^{\otimes n})$ associated to $F_{\text{PGL}_{r_t}}$ for the $\text{PGL}_{r_t}(k)$ -module $\bigwedge^{\text{top}} H^0(\text{Gr}_s(k^{\oplus r_t}), (K_{\text{Gr}_s(k^{\oplus r_t})}^{-1})^{\otimes n})$ is trivial.

As $\det(f_*(K_f^{-1})^{\otimes n})$ is trivial and $\text{degree}(\mathcal{L}) = 0$,

$$\text{degree}(((f_*(K_f^{-1})^{\otimes n}) \otimes \mathcal{L}_0^{\otimes n})) = 0.$$

Since V_t/V_{t-1} is strongly semistable, the corresponding principal $\text{GL}_{r_t}(k)$ -bundle $F_{\text{GL}_{r_t}}$ is strongly semistable. Therefore, the associated vector bundle $f_*(K_f^{-1})^{\otimes n}$ is also semistable (see [RR, p. 285, Theorem 3.18] and [RR, p. 288, Theorem 3.23]). This implies that $(f_*(K_f^{-1})^{\otimes n}) \otimes \mathcal{L}_0^{\otimes n}$ is semistable.

For a semistable vector bundle \mathcal{V} on X of degree zero, any nonzero section $\sigma : \mathcal{O}_X \rightarrow \mathcal{V}$ is nowhere vanishing. Indeed, this follows immediately from the semistability condition that the line bundle of \mathcal{V} generated by the image of σ is of nonpositive degree. Consequently,

$$\dim H^0(X, \mathcal{V}) \leq \text{rank}(\mathcal{V}).$$

Since $(f_*(K_f^{-1})^{\otimes n}) \otimes \mathcal{L}_0^{\otimes n}$ is semistable of degree zero, we have

$$(3.23) \quad \dim H^0(X, (f_*(K_f^{-1})^{\otimes n}) \otimes \mathcal{L}_0^{\otimes n}) \leq \text{rank}((f_*(K_f^{-1})^{\otimes n}) \otimes \mathcal{L}_0^{\otimes n}) = \text{rank}((f_*(K_f^{-1})^{\otimes n}))$$

for all $n > 0$.

We have $R^j f_*((K_f^{-1})^{\otimes n}) = 0$ for $j, n \geq 1$. Hence from the Riemann–Roch theorem for the restriction $(K_f^{-1})^{\otimes n}|_{f^{-1}(x)}$, $x \in X$, we conclude that $\text{rank}((f_*(K_f^{-1})^{\otimes n}))$ is a polynomial of degree at most $d_0 - 1$ (which is the dimension of the fibers of f). Therefore,

using (3.22) and (3.23) we conclude that

$$\dim H^0(\mathrm{Gr}_s(V_t/V_{t-1}), \gamma^* \mathcal{O}_{\mathrm{Gr}_r((F_X^\delta)^* E)}(n \cdot \mathrm{rank}(V_t/V_{t-1})))$$

is a polynomial of degree at most $d_0 - 1$. But this contradicts (3.19).

We assumed that $\mathcal{O}_{\mathrm{Gr}_r(E)}(1)$ is ample, and were led to the above contradiction. Therefore, we conclude that $\mathcal{O}_{\mathrm{Gr}_r(E)}(1)$ is not ample. This completes the proof of the lemma. \square

Lemma 3.1, Lemma 3.2 and Lemma 3.3 together give the following:

Theorem 3.4. *If $\theta_{E,r} > 0$, then the line bundle $\mathcal{O}_{\mathrm{Gr}_r(E)}(1) \rightarrow \mathrm{Gr}_r(E)$ in (3.2) is ample.*

If $\theta_{E,r} = 0$, then $\mathcal{O}_{\mathrm{Gr}_r(E)}(1)$ is nef but not ample.

If $\theta_{E,r} < 0$, then $\mathcal{O}_{\mathrm{Gr}_r(E)}(1)$ is not nef.

4. THE NEF CONE OF $\mathrm{Gr}_r(E)$

In this section we will compute the nef cone of $\mathrm{Gr}_r(E)$ using Theorem 3.4. Being a closed cone, it is generated by its boundary. For notational reasons, it will be convenient to treat the cases of characteristic zero and positive characteristic separately.

For a smooth projective variety Z , the real Néron–Severi group $\mathrm{NS}(Z)_{\mathbb{R}}$ is defined to be

$$(4.1) \quad \mathrm{NS}(Z)_{\mathbb{R}} := (\mathrm{Pic}(Z)/\mathrm{Pic}^0(Z)) \otimes_{\mathbb{Z}} \mathbb{R},$$

where $\mathrm{Pic}^0(Z)$ is the connected component, containing the identity element, of the Picard group $\mathrm{Pic}(Z)$ of Z .

4.1. Characteristic is zero. In this case, the number δ in (3.5) is zero.

As in (3.1), φ is the projection of $\mathrm{Gr}_r(E)$ to X . Fix a line bundle L_1 over X of degree one. The line bundle $\varphi^* L_1$ will be denoted by \mathcal{L} . The real Néron–Severi group $\mathrm{NS}(\mathrm{Gr}_r(E))_{\mathbb{R}}$ is freely generated by \mathcal{L} and $\mathcal{O}_{\mathrm{Gr}_r(E)}(1)$.

Although $\theta_{E,r}$ in (3.5) need not be an integer, we note that $\mathcal{L}^{\otimes -\theta_{E,r}}$ is well defined as an element of $\mathrm{NS}(\mathrm{Gr}_r(E))_{\mathbb{R}}$ because $\theta_{E,r} \in \mathbb{Q}$.

Proposition 4.1. *The boundary of the nef cone in $\mathrm{NS}(\mathrm{Gr}_r(E))_{\mathbb{R}}$ is given by \mathcal{L} and $\mathcal{O}_{\mathrm{Gr}_r(E)}(1) \otimes \mathcal{L}^{\otimes -\theta_{E,r}}$.*

Proof. We will first show that it is enough to treat the case where $\theta_{E,r}$ is a multiple of r . In fact, this argument is standard (see [Laz, p. 23, Lemma 6.2.8]). However, we describe the details for completeness.

Write

$$\theta_{E,r} = \frac{p_1 r}{q_1},$$

where p_1 and q_1 are integers with $q_1 > 0$. Take a pair (Y, f) , where Y is an irreducible smooth projective curve, and f is a morphism from Y to X , such that $\mathrm{degree}(f)$ is a

multiple of q_1 . The natural map

$$\gamma : \mathrm{Gr}_r(f^*E) \longrightarrow \mathrm{Gr}_r(E)$$

produces an isomorphism between $\mathrm{NS}(\mathrm{Gr}_r(E))_{\mathbb{R}}$ and $\mathrm{NS}(\mathrm{Gr}_r(f^*E))_{\mathbb{R}}$. This isomorphism preserves the nef cones. Therefore, it is enough to prove the proposition for (Y, f^*E) . Note that $\theta_{f^*E, r} = \frac{\deg(f)p_1 r}{q_1}$ is a multiple of r .

Hence we can assume that $\theta_{E, r}/r$ is an integer.

Consider the vector bundle

$$F := E \otimes L_1^{\otimes -\frac{\theta_{E, r}}{r}}.$$

Note that $\mathrm{Gr}_r(E) = \mathrm{Gr}_r(F)$. From (3.5) and the definition of F it follows immediately that

$$\theta_{F, r} = 0.$$

Since $\theta_{F, r} = 0$, from the second part of Theorem 3.4 we know that the nef cone in $\mathrm{NS}(\mathrm{Gr}_r(F))_{\mathbb{R}}$ is generated by $\mathcal{O}_{\mathrm{Gr}_r(F)}(1)$ and \mathcal{L} (it is considered as a line bundle on $\mathrm{Gr}_r(F)$ using the identification of $\mathrm{Gr}_r(F)$ with $\mathrm{Gr}_r(E)$). The proposition follows immediately from this description of the nef cone in $\mathrm{NS}(\mathrm{Gr}_r(F))_{\mathbb{R}}$ using the identification of $\mathrm{Gr}_r(F)$ with $\mathrm{Gr}_r(E)$. \square

Remark 4.2. We note that the two generators of the nef cone given in Proposition 4.1 lie in the rational Néron–Severi group $\mathrm{NS}(\mathrm{Gr}_r(E))_{\mathbb{Q}} := (\mathrm{Pic}(Z)/\mathrm{Pic}^0(Z)) \otimes_{\mathbb{Z}} \mathbb{Q}$.

4.2. Characteristic is positive. Let $p > 0$ be the characteristic of k . Consider δ in (3.5). Let $\varphi_1 : \mathrm{Gr}_r((F_X^\delta)^*E) \longrightarrow X$ be the natural projection. Define the line bundle

$$\mathcal{L}_1 := \varphi_1^* L_1 \longrightarrow X,$$

where L_1 is a fixed line bundle on X of degree one.

Lemma 4.3. *The nef cone in $\mathrm{NS}(\mathrm{Gr}_r((F_X^\delta)^*E))_{\mathbb{R}}$ (defined in (4.1)) is generated by \mathcal{L}_1 and $\mathcal{O}_{\mathrm{Gr}_r((F_X^\delta)^*E)}(1) \otimes \mathcal{L}_1^{\otimes -\theta_{(F_X^\delta)^*E, r}}$.*

Proof. The proof is exactly identical to the proof of Proposition 4.1. We refrain from repeating it. \square

As in (3.1), the projection of $\mathrm{Gr}_r(E)$ to X will be denoted by φ . Define

$$\mathcal{L} := \varphi^* L_1.$$

Proposition 4.4. *The boundary of the nef cone in $\mathrm{NS}(\mathrm{Gr}_r(E))_{\mathbb{R}}$ is given by \mathcal{L} and $\mathcal{O}_{\mathrm{Gr}_r(E)}(p^\delta) \otimes \mathcal{L}^{\otimes -\theta_{(F_X^\delta)^*E, r}}$.*

Proof. Consider the commutative diagram of morphisms in (3.14). The morphism β in this diagram produces an isomorphism between $\mathrm{NS}(\mathrm{Gr}_r(E))_{\mathbb{R}}$ and $\mathrm{NS}(\mathrm{Gr}_r((F_X^\delta)^*E))_{\mathbb{R}}$. This isomorphism preserves the nef cones.

We have $\beta^* \mathcal{O}_{\mathrm{Gr}_r(E)}(1) = \mathcal{O}_{\mathrm{Gr}_r((F_X^\delta)^*E)}(1)$, and $(F_X^\delta)^* L_1 = L_1^{\otimes p^\delta}$. Hence the proposition follows from Lemma 4.3. \square

Remark 4.5. The two generators of the nef cone given in Proposition 4.4 lie in $\mathrm{NS}(\mathrm{Gr}_r(E))_{\mathbb{Q}}$.

5. THE NEF CONE OF FLAG BUNDLES

Fix integers

$$0 < r_1 < r_2 < \cdots < r_{\nu-1} < r_\nu < \text{rank}(E).$$

Let

$$\Phi : \text{Fl}(E) \longrightarrow X$$

be the corresponding flag bundle; so for any $x \in X$, the fiber $\Phi^{-1}(x)$ parametrizes all filtrations of linear subspaces

$$(5.1) \quad E_x \supset S_1 \supset S_2 \supset \cdots \supset S_{\nu-1} \supset S_\nu$$

such that $\dim E_x - \dim S_i = r_i$ for all $i \in [1, \nu]$.

For each $i \in [1, \nu]$, let $\text{Gr}_{r_i}(E)$ be the Grassmann bundle over X parametrizing all the r_i dimensional quotients of the fibers of E . Let

$$(5.2) \quad \phi_i : \text{Fl}(E) \longrightarrow \text{Gr}_{r_i}(E)$$

be the natural projection that sends any filtration as in (5.1) to E_x/S_i . Let

$$\omega_i \in \text{NS}(\text{Gr}_{r_i}(E))_{\mathbb{R}}$$

be the element $\mathcal{O}_{\text{Gr}_{r_i}(E)}(1) \otimes \mathcal{L}^{\otimes -\theta_{E, r_i}}$ (respectively, $\mathcal{O}_{\text{Gr}_{r_i}(E)}(p^\delta) \otimes \mathcal{L}^{\otimes -\theta_{(F_X^\delta)^* E, r_i}}$) in Proposition 4.1 (respectively, Proposition 4.4) if the characteristic of k is zero (respectively, positive). Define

$$\tilde{\omega}_i := \phi_i^* \omega_i \in \text{NS}(\text{Fl}(E))_{\mathbb{R}},$$

where ϕ_i is the projection in (5.2).

Theorem 5.1. *The nef cone in $\text{NS}(\text{Fl}(E))_{\mathbb{R}}$ is generated by $\{\tilde{\omega}_i\}_{i=1}^\nu \cup \Phi^* \mathcal{L}'$, where \mathcal{L}' is a line bundle over X of degree one.*

Proof. The dimension of the \mathbb{R} -vector space $\text{NS}(\text{Fl}(E))_{\mathbb{R}}$ is $\nu + 1$, and the vector space is generated by $\{\tilde{\omega}_i\}_{i=1}^\nu \cup \Phi^* \mathcal{L}'$. We note that \mathcal{L}' and all $\tilde{\omega}_i$ are nef.

Fix any point $x \in X$. For each $i \in [1, \nu]$, define

$$\tilde{\omega}_{x,i} := \tilde{\omega}_i|_{\Phi^{-1}(x)} \in \text{NS}(\Phi^{-1}(x))_{\mathbb{R}}.$$

The dimension of the \mathbb{R} -vector space $\text{NS}(\Phi^{-1}(x))_{\mathbb{R}}$ is ν . It is known that the nef cone of $\text{NS}(\Phi^{-1}(x))_{\mathbb{R}}$ is generated by $\{\tilde{\omega}_{x,i}\}_{i=1}^\nu$ (see [Br, p. 187, Theorem 1] for a general result). In view of this, the theorem follows from Proposition 4.1 (respectively, Proposition 4.4) when the characteristic of k is zero (respectively, positive). \square

Remark 5.2. All the elements of the generating set of the nef cone in $\text{NS}(\text{Fl}(E))_{\mathbb{R}}$ given in Theorem 5.1 lie in $\text{NS}(\text{Fl}(E))_{\mathbb{Q}}$.

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